

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/666,859

Applicant(s)

MURAKAMI ET AL.

Examiner

Philip C. Lee

Art Unit

2154

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 4/14/05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,2,4 and 6-12.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 21 September 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date 7/22/05.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

JOHN FOLLANSBEE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100

1. An Examiner's Amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 C.F.R. 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the Issue Fee.
2. Authorization for the examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Paul Bobowiec, reg. no. 47,431, on July 22, 2005.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: None of the prior art of records teach or suggest in combination a method used in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:
 - calculating virtual chat space characteristics of said virtual chat spaces based on said specific keyword categories associated with the virtual chat spaces, the virtual chat space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the specific keyword categories; and
 - reporting said virtual chat space characteristics to users of said chat devices by displaying at least one of a specific keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of highest relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the specific keyword categories,
 - wherein the virtual chat space characteristics are calculated based on the total of at least the relevance points associated with said specific keyword category weighted by the recorded

message volume and by the period of time a chat device that sent or received a message having at least one of the specific keywords remains in the virtual chat space.

4. The application has been amended as follows:
 - a. Replace claim 1 to read as of the following:

In Claim 1,

1. (currently amended) A communication support method used in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:

associating and preparing specific keywords ~~prior to recording a chat volume~~ with specific keyword categories prior to recording a message volume,~~[[;]] specifying said keyword categories wherein~~ messages sent or received in a virtual chat space have at least one of said specific keywords ~~are included in messages sent or received in a virtual space~~;

associating and storing said specific keywords and said specific keyword categories with virtual chat space identifiers of said virtual chat spaces ~~in which messages are sent or received~~;

calculating virtual chat space characteristics of said virtual chat spaces based on said specific keyword categories associated with the virtual chat spaces, the virtual chat space

characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the specific keyword categories; and

reporting said virtual chat space characteristics to users of said chat devices by displaying at least one of a specific keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of highest relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the specific keyword categories,

wherein the ~~chat~~ message volume is recorded during a period of time after a message ~~including~~ having at least one of the specific keywords is sent in the virtual chat space;

wherein the recorded ~~chat~~ message volume having at least one of the specific keywords is proportional to an amount of interest of at least one user participating in the virtual chat space ~~in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords~~; and

wherein the virtual chat space characteristics are calculated based on the total of at least the relevance points associated with said specific keyword category weighted by the recorded chat message volume and by the period of time a chat device that sent or received a message having at least one of the specific keywords remains in the virtual chat space.

b. Replace claim 2 to read as of the following:

In Claim 2,

2. (currently amended) A communication support system used in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:

a category table for associating and storing specific keywords with specific keyword categories prior to recording a ~~chat~~ message volume;

a virtual chat space table for associating and storing virtual chat space identifiers, said specific keywords sent into said virtual chat spaces, and said specific keyword categories;

a control means for reading said specific keyword categories from said category table and for writing the virtual chat space table said virtual chat space identifiers of said virtual chat spaces into which at least one of said specific keywords were sent, said specific keywords, and said specific keyword categories, wherein a message sent into virtual chat space is acquired from said chat system and said message ~~includes~~ has at least one of said specific keywords;

a decision means for calculating virtual chat space characteristics of said virtual chat space based on said specific keyword categories associated with the virtual chat spaces, the virtual chat space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the specific keyword categories; and

an output means for outputting said characteristics of said virtual chat spaces by displaying at least one of ~~[[a]]~~ the specific keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of highest relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the specific keyword categories,

wherein the ~~chat~~ message volume is recorded during a period of time after a message ~~including~~ having at least one of the specific keywords is sent in the virtual chat space;

wherein the recorded ~~chat~~ message volume having at least one of the specific keywords is proportional to an amount of interest of at least one user participating in the virtual chat space ~~in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords~~; and

wherein the virtual chat space characteristics are calculated based on the total of at least the relevance points associated with said specific keyword category weighted by the recorded chat message volume and by the period of time a chat device that sent or received a message having at least one of the specific keywords remains in the virtual chat space.

c. Cancel claim 5,

5. (canceled)

d. Replace claim 12 to read as of the following:

In Claim 12,

12. (currently amended) A computer-readable recording medium on which is a recorded ~~[[a]]~~ communication support program used in an information terminal capable of broadcasting a message to chat devices which share virtual chat spaces configured on a network and can send and receive messages among themselves, the control program executing the stages comprising:

preparing a category table for associating and storing specific keywords with specific

keyword categories prior to recording a ~~chat~~ message volume;

preparing a virtual chat space table for associating and storing virtual chat space identifiers of said virtual chat spaces, said specific keywords sent into said virtual chat spaces, and said specific keyword categories;

reading said specific keyword categories from said category tables and writing to the virtual chat space table said virtual chat space identifiers of said virtual chat spaces into which said specific keywords were sent, said specific keywords, and said specific keyword categories, wherein a message sent in virtual chat space is acquired from said chat system and the message ~~includes~~ has at least one of said specific keywords;

calculating virtual chat space characteristics of said virtual chat spaces based on said specific keyword categories associated with said virtual chat spaces, the virtual chat space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the specific keyword categories; and

outputting said characteristics of said virtual chat spaces by displaying at least one of ~~[[a]]~~ the specific keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of highest relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the specific keyword categories,

wherein the ~~chat~~ message volume is recorded during a period of time after a message ~~including~~ having at least one of the specific keywords is sent in the virtual chat space;

wherein the recorded ~~chat~~ message volume having at least one of the specific keywords is proportional to an amount of interest of at least one user participating in the virtual chat space ~~in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords~~; and

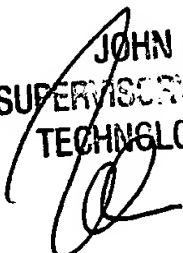
wherein the virtual chat space characteristics are calculated based on the total of at least the relevance points associated with said specific keyword category weighted by the recorded chat message volume and by the period of time a chat device that sent or received a message having at least one of the specific keywords remains in the virtual chat space.

e. Cancel claim 13,

13. (canceled)

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip C. Lee whose telephone number is (571) 272-3967. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 AM TO 5:30 PM Monday to Thursday and every other Friday. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Follansbee can be reached on (571) 272-3964. The fax phone number for Group 2100 is (571) 273-8300.

Philip Lee

 JOHN FOLLANSBEE
SUPERVISOR, PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100